

MISERY OF SINNERS.

I deny not punishment; but punishment is not the *leading idea* in the misery of sinners. Into the place of that punishment, *they bear with them the worm that dieth not*—the sin which they have let to grow until it is finished. Their evil passions and their remorse will not die. The lost will find their misery essentially *their own*—essentially from within—essentially from the *power of finished and full grown sin*. The same sinful passions which have made their most wretched moments or hours on earth, will make the lost inwardly wretched for ever. If there should be added no other causes of misery, they must be fully and inconceivably wretched for ever. "Their worm dieth not." Wicked minds will prey inwardly on themselves for ever.

But there is another natural and necessary cause. Sin grows in the bosom of the lost, under the influence of the God of this world, and in connection with the thousands deluded by his temptations; and another cause of misery is its *social condition*, amidst fallen angels and lost men. A bad neighborhood makes a bad man worse—more unhappy within himself, and still more unhappy from the wickedness which prevails around him. A society formed of men who have become fully grown in sin—who have employed the discipline of life—the lights of salvation—only in promoting the growth and fixing the substance of evil passions! What a state of misery is this!—If you add to this conception, the company of the devil and his angels—spirits doubly lost in sinful passions—the conception is utterly over-coming! Alas! what think you will be the condition of that terrible society, where Satan shall rage—not now abroad, seeking whom he may devour—but at home, seeking whom of the wretched, he can make more wretched; where innumerable wicked angels and wicked men shall find their only employment in making their companions more wretched; where the description of the misery of each is, "their worm dieth not," and of all, "their fire is not quenched"; where each soul burns with an inward fire, more intense, because it receives and communicates of the furnace heat in which all glow together?

I confess that if this is all that is meant by *everlasting fire*; if *fire* be employed only to express the *social misery* of the lost—the misery of each made intense by the misery and wickedness of all; even then is it terrible above all conception. O, to be partners in finished sin!—to be brothers in a brother-hating family!—to be neighbors in a neighbor-hating neighborhood!—to be joined in a society with the cement of malice and envy!—to be lighted up, as a social body, with the fire of universal discord!—to be fixed eternally in the focus of everlasting hatred!—what furnace heat can be imagined to be compared to this? What idea of eternal misery can exceed this, towards which, every day, Satan is leading on the lost?

The views already given are drawn from every man's own experience—from mine—yours. Every man knows, in degree, the misery to which mere destitution of Christ's image often leaves him in this world; and also the deeper misery from the exercise and consequences of allowed and indulged sin. So well is this known, as to become the chief argument in many minds, for the conclusion, *that there will be no punishment hereafter*. Little do they consider, how terrible the argument is, from this, that there will be suffering hereafter! Is sin, before it is finished—in a life where it has not free scope—where it is *every where* restrained from venting itself—*every where* hindered in its social influence and reaction—found, in every man's experience, to bring its own punishment? Who, then, is willing to learn, by experience, what the death is, which, when it is finished, it *must* bring forth? One hour of suffering, because you have not Christ's image formed in you—one hour of suffering from the exercise or the consequences of evil passions—nay, one moment—has in it bitterness enough to give assurance and forewarning of a worm that dieth not, and a fire that shall never be quenched. Granted, if you will, that God is too merciful to punish those who refuse to be changed into Christ's image—who blind their eyes, under the influence of Satan's temptations, until sin becomes finished—how shall *they* be blessed, who have ripened in their own bosom, and in their chosen society, the chief misery of their earthly condition?

A Word to You.

Stupid sinner! a word to you! Is it possible for you to remain stupid, amid the awakening interests that now encircle you? A

stupid sinner! How incongruous the phrase sounds! Rebellion against Jehovah's government is proved against thee; and yet thou art stupid. Jesus poured out his blood for thee; and yet thou art stupid. Thou art one, over whose conversion the angels of heaven would rejoice; and yet, concerning this momentous subject thou art stupid. Hell yawns to engulf thee; heaven invites thee; in a short time the grave will enclose thy body, and if thou diest as thou art, the world of despair will be the abode of thy soul. Every moment thou art exposed to such a dread exchange of worlds. And canst thou be stupid? Awake, stupid sinner! or thou wilt soon lift up thine eyes, "being in torment."

A young lady who was resident in a minister's family, remained at home on Sabbath, and going to the library, she took from the shelf a volume of sermons. She glanced at this sentiment,—viz., that sometimes, when God is about to give a sinner up to hardness of heart he leaves him to unusual stupidity.—This truth awakened her soul. Reader! may it awaken yours ere it be too late.

Opposing sinner! a word to you! Why do you oppose religion? What can you gain by such a course? Your neighbor, that stupid sinner, also opposes the truth of the gospel; but he does not so boldly unfurl the flag of hostility as you do. You boisterously proclaim war against God. You glory in your shame. Do not oppose the only system that can save you from utter ruin. Do not beat away the only life-boat that floats alongside your tossed and sinking bark. "Stop! poor sinner! stop and think!"

Awakened sinner! a word to you! The mercy of God is indeed great to you, if he has begun to show you something of your condition. Had it not been for the Spirit's awakening influences you would have slumbered on undisturbed. But remember, you are awakened. If you are not a Christian, you are at this moment an opposing sinner at heart, however much you may be awakened to a sense of your guilt and danger. Do you feel yourself

"Awak'd by Sinai's awful sound?"

then, flee to Jesus without delay. Think not that because you are awakened, you are safe. Hell is peopled with those who on earth were awakened sinners.

Distressed sinner! a word to you! Do not suppose that your distress merits any favor for you at the hand of God. If sinners suppose that because they are so much distressed God will have mercy on them, they condemn those agonies which were endured on Calvary.—Your increased distress is the fruit of your protracted rebellion. Do not, then, imagine for a moment, that your tears, and anguish, and cries, shall be reckoned to make up any part, no, not the smallest fraction of the ground of your acceptance with God. Your only source of hope can be expressed in three short words—*faith in Christ*. The language of your heart must be.

"Simply to thy cross I cling;"

then all shall be peace between your troubled soul and your offended God.

Hoping sinner! a word to you! Is your only hope in the atoning blood of the Lamb of God? If so, I rejoice. You will be kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation. But examine well. You may have deceived yourself. Read the parable of the ten virgins, and contemplate its leading sentiment, which is this—*Make thorough preparation for the hour of trial*. Take oil in your vessels with your lamps. Do you indeed hope that your feet are taken from the miry clay, and are placed upon the rock? Then will you sing, "Oh, to grace how great a debtor!"—Do you begin to taste the gospel feast? Then will you be constrained to say—

"Why was I made to hear thy voice,
And enter while there's room,
While thousands make a wretched choice,
And rather starve than come?"

Do you hope that you now inquire the way to Zion, with your face thitherward? Then cast your eye upon those multitudes in that broad road that leads to death. Go, young convert! Warn that stupid sinner. Expostulate with that opposing sinner. Exhort that awakened sinner. Plead in melting terms with that distressed sinner. In the deep fervor of your soul, tell them all what a Saviour you have found!

Going and Weeping.

This is the law of usefulness and success. No good thing or great was ever achieved, which did not involve difficulty and exertion.

Toil and suffering are the price of good. He who will not endure, cannot rejoice. Weep and rejoicing—toiling and achieving—suffering and exulting are blended by an inevitable law. It is the child of God that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed; who shall doubtless return again rejoicing.

He must go forth from his sins. Every known transgression must be repented of, and abandoned. While we regard iniquity in our hearts, the Lord will not hear us. So long as we cherish a single sin, of whatever nature, we shall not succeed in spiritual endeavours. God requires honest hearts in his service, however imperfect. The Christian that would do good, and have its reward, must be filled, with the serious purpose of doing *all of God's will*. The spirit of entire and unreserved obedience is an essential element of christian character. Lord, what wilt thou have me to do, must be at once the principle of exertion and the measure of success.

He must go forth from his closet. Here lies the grand means of success. The spirit of earnest and importunate prayer—the bowing of the heart before God, ensures a happy result. All depends upon this. With this the christian laborer cannot fail of success; without it, he cannot fail of defeat.

He must go forth weeping. He must weep for his own backwardness and unfaithfulness. He must lament the forgetfulness of the sins and the perils of the impenitent around him—his sad violations of solemn covenant engagements—his practical disregard of the impressive claims of his Maker. He should weep for the Master's honor. How is his glory disregarded—his law disobeyed—his wonderful mercy in Christ Jesus despised! The consideration of the awful facts with which he is conversant—the nearness and solemnity of eternity—the momentous issues of the judgment—all should weigh down the Christian with deep and tender anxiety. He must feel these solemn truths, till his heart swells and breaks over them.

He must go forth determined to do all in his power. He should feel that he is the steward of the Lord—bound by every possible obligation to achieve something for his glory. God has required of him nothing that he does not expect him to do—nothing which it should not be his fixed and unceasing purpose to perform.

He must go forth bearing precious seed.—The means of spiritual influence with which he has been gifted, must be faithfully and perseveringly used. He should bring to bear the mighty influence of a holy example. He should alarm the ungodly, and dissipate their unbelief, by his own earnest and solemn regard for eternal things—convincing them of their danger by his constant anxiety, and their immense interest by his overflowing zeal.

He must go forth expecting success. His expectations will do the measure both of his labor and its results. "According to thy faith be it unto thee," is the rule of the kingdom.—He must have a definite object, and one which is felt to be overwhelming. He should keep before him the solemn interests which are involved in his labors—all that concerns the eternal destiny of men. He should carry his eye forward to the judgment, and summon before him its impressive incidents; and in the view of them judge of the worth of the interests for which he labors. Let him recall the scenes of Calvary; and in the agonies of the Son of God, learn their infinite value. Let him feel that the salvation of a soul is of more worth than the creation of a world. Let him remember that this is an object so great that Godhead thought it not unworthy to undertake it. What can be greater? What better worthy of prayerful, laborious effort?—*N. Y. Evangelist*.

The Christian Inheritance and Christian Beneficence.

It is no mere rhetorical figure that Paul uses when he says to christians, *ALL ARE YOURS*.—For by adoption christians become joint heirs with Christ, who is "Heir of all things." "If children then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs of Jesus Christ." And as Christ's inheritance embraces all things, so does the christian's. Not only shall all things work together for his good; but all things are actually his—as really, though in a higher and better sense—as really his, as a man's stocks or estates on earth are his. His conversion to Christ has converted Christ's inheritance to him.

Observe now the christian's relations to Christ's work of benevolence. With Christ's property the work of publishing his gospel to

every creature is to be sustained. He has given it all to his people in ultimate possession; and in such a way, that one individual's possession does not exclude another's. Each has as good a title and use of the whole inheritance, as if he were the sole heir. Christ has also put each one in present possession of a small part of the inheritance upon a trial to see whether he will be faithful over a few things, that he may be made ruler over many things. He comes to us and asks us to give a portion of what we have in hand, for the present occasions of publishing this gospel, that he has put us in possession of a glorious inheritance; and we close our purses and hearts against the demand. But why? We say that though we have immense riches in stocks and title deeds, we have little ready money. This is true. But Christ demands only a reasonable proportion of the ready money, which he gives us. And he gives it to us to prove our willingness to impart of it; *according as he has prospered us*; or according to the ready money which we have.—The wickedness and absurdity in the case consists of withholding more than is meet, of what we have in hand; for the sake of laying up against a future day; when Christ himself has laid up for that, and when we are supposed to have laid up a treasure in heaven—laid up in store a good foundation (that is fund) against the time to come.

If all things are yours, where is the need of covetousness or avarice? If all things are yours, why these insane grasping after a part, a mere atom of your whole inheritance? If ye had the wealth of Croesus in the surest of all investments, and were then found all absorbed in the care of a single sapphire, as if that were all your dependence, we should call you insane. What then, if we see the heirs of all things shutting their hearts and hands against the Giver of all—vexing and exhausting themselves on some worthless patch of their patrimony—some mere shadow of a nothing—unconscious of the universal good!—*Pa. Rec.*

We would see Jesus.

A FRAGMENT.

I would see Jesus, in prosperity, that her fascinating light may not lead me to a dreadful precipice, but that his good spirit may whisper to my heart the noble inducements Christians have to devise liberal things; that I may ever be saying, "What am I, O Lord, that thou shouldst put it into my heart to do these things, when the earth is thine and the fulness thereof; it is but thine own which I return unto thee."

I would see Jesus in adversity, because he is a friend born for such a state; because when all the fallacious props of happiness give way, his single name alone supports the building. I would see Jesus in adversity, that I might order my cause before him, for he has all power in heaven and on earth, so as to throw lustre on the darkest circumstances.

I would see Jesus in health, that I may turn at his gentlest reproof; that I may not be full and forget God, but be devoted body as well as soul to his praise.

I would see Jesus in sickness, because he healeth all my diseases; he alone dispenses the balm of Gilead, he alone is the Physician there.

I would see Jesus in ordinances, for, what are ordinances destitute of him? As the body without the spirit is dead, so are ordinances without Christ. He shews himself thro' the lattices, he appears in all his beauty, he is as dew unto Israel, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land; his people sit under his shade with great delight; his fruit is pleasant to their taste. They say continually in ordinances, "Make haste O my beloved; be thou like a young hart upon the mountains."

I would see Jesus in social intercourse; For what are the charms of friendship? What the refinements of taste? What the pleasures of conversation? Are they not all unsatisfying and delusive, unless sanctified by the grace of this Redeemer?

I would see Jesus in my own heart, as lord of its affections, of its purposes, of its pleasures; as the grand mover of its hopes and fears, the author of its existence and happiness.

I would see Jesus in death, as the Son of Righteousness, whose beams in the darkest moment can spread light and healing. I would listen to his voice, saying, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life." "Fear not I have the keys of hell and death." Arise, O thou wearied follower of the crucified Lord, and enter into thy rest.

I would see Jesus in glory, for what is heaven itself without him? But when we shall see him as he is, then shall we be like him, and be happy in his presence.